PLAIN ACCOUNT

OF THE

TRINITY.

EDWARD JOHNSON, Merch.

[Price Two Shillings.]

J. E. K.

R. Fleeman

A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE TRINITY FROM SCRIPTURE and REASON.

Wherein is clearly proved

That the *Belief* of This Doctrine as Imposed by CHURCH AUTHORITY, is a HUMAN INVENTION, and not to be found in the SCRIPTURES.

WITH

A Dissertation upon the BEAUTY and STYLE of the Sacred Writings,

And a Conference between the Author and his Friend concerning the gross Absurdities of the Trinitarian Scheme now insisted on.

Written by a GENTLEMAN.

EDWARD JOHNSON merch.

WHO is on the LORD's *side*, let him come unto ME: Let HIM that *Readeth* UNDERSTAND. *Exod.* xxxii. 26.

LEARNING *what art Thou? not our* Guide *it should seem, or* Clue, *but the* Labyrinth *in which the* Ablest, *and most* Observant, *quickly lose* themselves. S. NYE.

LONDON:
Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXXIX.

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A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO THE BOOKSELLER.

SIR,

I Herewith send you a *Manuscript*, which if you, after the perusal of, think worthy of the Press, I desire may be printed; I am by an acquaintance of your's recommended to you, but he being of different principles to what these papers set forth, I would

not aſk him for a letter to you, but am willing, nevertheleſs, becauſe I hope they may be uſeful to the world, to have them publiſhed; there may poſſibly be ſome uncorrectneſſes in the ſtile, but otherwiſe in point of doctrine true in every part, I really in my conſcience verily believe; I would not therefore for ſmall defects have them diſcarded, if you, or any judicious friend, will be at the trouble to correct any errors or defects in them; you have not only my conſent for the doing it, but ſhall alſo have my thanks. If you do publiſh it, I beg it may be done every way to the beſt advantage. If any anſwers ſhall be written to it, pray ſend them to me. In the firſt publication, for ſome particular reaſons, I would not have my name put to it, and it will, I believe, be the better for you not to

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do it; but in the next edition, if it has another, as I fancy it will, you may, and it will be your advantage to do it too; in the first impression you may in respect of the author put it, if you please, thus, *viz.* *Written by a Gentleman.* All I have to say farther, is to desire that it may have a *fair* and a *candid* reading, and rather, in the doing it, a favourer of my principles; for a biggot of the other side, will, to be sure, no doubt, *right* or *wrong*, condemn it. I am with respect,

SIR,

Your most humble Servant,

St CHRISTOPHERS,
in the *West-Indies*,
Dec. 10. 1737.

E. J.

EDWARD JOHNSON

ADMONITION.

IF the READER, in the perusal of these papers, shall find any uncommon notion in them, as very possibly he may, the AUTHOR only desires this one thing of him, *viz.* that he will suspend his opinion till he has read the whole through; and even then, not to be too hasty in condemning the performance, till he has well considered of what at first sight gave him offence; uncommon notions, especially upon so tender a subject, I know upon the first representation

representation of them are apt to be received with prejudice, but a more mature consideration may possibly reconcile the matter; as for my own part, I have, otherwise I would not upon any account have adventured to make these writings publick, weighed and considered my subject over and over again; and upon the whole matter I solemnly declare, that I verily believe truth, and nothing but truth, is contained in it; and this I am the more perswaded of, because I think there is nothing said but what is fairly proved from the holy Scriptures; if all is true, and acknowledged for such, I am sure the cause of God and his holy religion, as meanly otherwise as it may be performed, will be very much served by this work; if it shall be otherwise adjudged, I shall be very sorry that I published it, for good, God knows, in publishing these papers I really and truly aimed at, and no evil in any kind or degree whatsoever; the subject is of such a nature, as that every one is concerned in it; and as all are concerned in it, so it is for the interest of all, and that in the highest degree, that truth should prevail; for who that has true religion at his heart, does not above all things desire to have it in its utmost purity; prejudice therefore, and all manner of partiality, ought in such a case as this, to be sure, have no place,

place, but be rejected with the utmoſt abhorrence; and this is all that is by this author deſired, and leſs than this, conſidering eſpecially the ſubject here treated of, he cannot ſurely expect, nay, this to deny him will not only be unjuſt, but really impious.

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A PLAIN

A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE TRINITY.

Saint PAUL in his *first* Epistle to *Timothy*, Chap. ii. ver. 5. informs him, that, *There is* ONE *God*; *and* ONE *Mediator between* GOD *and* MAN; *the* MAN *Christ Jesus.*

MY design from these words, is both to assert and prove the absolute and indefeasible Supremacy of the first Person mentioned in the text, and withal to shew, that the second is not, nor possibly can be, God Supreme, or equal to him. To the doing of which, as I take it, this text will very much contribute; that the Per-

ſons herein mentioned are not convertible, ſo as for the firſt to be termed a Mediator, or for the ſecond, *viz.* the Mediator to be termed God, God I mean Supreme, is moſt certain, becauſe they are in the ſtrongeſt terms that poſſibly can be by the conjunction. And, contradiſtinguiſhed, and as ſo, then beyond all diſpute, it muſt follow that they are not one and the ſame Being, but entirely diſtinct and ſeparate; ſo diſtinct as for one to be God, and the other to be a Mediator only; and this, when we come to deſcribe their particular Characters, will ſtill be made more manifeſt, for then as what will be ſaid of the firſt, will by no means ſuit or be applicable to what will be ſaid of the ſecond, ſo neither will what ſaid of the ſecond, ſuit or be applicable to what will be ſaid of the firſt. With the firſt of theſe I begin,

THERE is, the holy Apoſtle ſays, one God, one Eternal, Almighty, Infinite, and Incomprehenſible God, whoſe Being is from none, being by neceſſity of nature entirely, of, in, and from himſelf, ſelf-exiſtent, unoriginated, underived, independent, who is the original and fountain of all Being and Power, from whom, of conſequence, all Beings both in Heaven and Earth derive what they are and have, and

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upon whom, for the continuance of their Beings, they all wholely and ſolely do ever depend. There is, the Apoſtle ſays, one ſuch Being or God as this, and only one; but though ſo, if yet ſo much as is here ſaid of this can be truly ſaid of the other, *viz.* the Mediator, I will freely him alſo acknowledge to be God Supreme; but if otherwiſe, by no means, not.

BEFORE I enter upon the deſcription of the ſecond Perſon mentioned in the text, I ſhall ſomething conſider, and endeavour to explain what in the text is ſaid of him, as, ſays the Apoſtle, there is one God, ſo alſo there is between God and Men one Mediator, *viz.* the Man Chriſt Jeſus. One Mediator between God and Men; the ſenſe of theſe words will, I think, admit of a double conſtruction, ſo as to relate either to his Perſon or his Office; to his Perſon, I ſay, it may very truly, whether deſigned by the Apoſtle or not, relate, as referring to his office; the ſenſe is, That as a Mediator, his buſineſs is to mediate or intercede a reconciliation between God and Men; and this I take to be the moſt obvious ſenſe of the words; as referring to his Perſon, it will be thus, That he is in nature ſo between God and Man, as ſingly conſidered, to be wholely, neither God nor

Man, but rather both, as he was born of the Virgin Mary, he was Man; but as he was, in an ineffable and in an incomprehensible manner, before all ages, and all worlds, begotten of God, so he is God, God I mean by generation; and that as truly and naturally as one Man born of another is Man; for what is born or begotten of God, even reason will tell us, must, and can be no other than God; from God, I say, in way of generation God must be produced, as well as Man from Man; but after this is said, infinite difference still must be made between the begetter and the begotten; for he that is begotten has a cause of his Being, but the begetter, being, as has been shewn, from himself only and self-existent, has none, this then, I say, makes infinite difference betwixt them; for whatever has a cause of his Being cannot, to be sure, for that very reason, be God Supreme; God himself, if he had a cause of his Being, would be neither God nor Supreme; it is self-existence only that makes him so; our Saviour then being by all allowed to be begotten, and not self-existent, though he, by generation, is most certainly God, yet God Supreme or equal to his Father he surely is not; but against this distinction some, it is possible, may thus argue, That as the Father of our

Lord

Lord and Saviour is self-existent, it seems to be reasonable to suppose, that the Son should from him derive the same nature: To this I answer, no, by no means, neither is it, because it implies a downright contradiction, even in the Power of God himself, to make a self-existent Being; for no Being can any manner of ways by God be produced, but it must follow that he has a cause of his being, and, if a cause, then self-existent, to be sure, he cannot be, for self-existence will not admit of any.

FROM all which it necessarily follows, that there are, notwithstanding the Apostle says that there is but one God only, yet really and truly two, one indeed only, as no doubt he means Supreme, the other subordinate, and entirely from the other by way of generation, derived; if this sounds harsh I cannot help it; but that it is Gospel, nay, and even a reasonable doctrine too, I will take upon me to prove; nothing then is more certain than that, in the Gospel, God is said to have a Son, and this Son is every where said to be by him begotten, in what manner he was begotten, the very Angels of Heaven, in all probability, are ignorant of; but begotten yet it is most certain he was, and if begotten, what in reason can be imagined must from thence be produced,

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neither Angel nor Man to be ſure could not, I mean with reference only to his original generation; and if not, it muſt of conſequence moſt ſurely follow, that, as I have before ſaid from Man, in the way of generation, Man is produced, ſo from God in the ſame way God muſt be produced. I muſt myſelf own that this doctrine at firſt ſight is ſtrange and ſurpriſing, but notwithſtanding that, a true doctrine it moſt ſurely is, and can, if we will believe the Goſpel, be no otherwiſe; for there, though by the light of nature, it is moſt certain we could never have known it, yet, I ſay, there we moſt certainly find it. By the light of nature we could never have known that God has a Son, but there we certainly know that he has, and that being known, what, even in reaſon, can we ſay of him, or what can we think him to be? A Creature ſurely he cannot be; no, as being the begotten Son of God, he muſt no doubt be infinitely exalted above all created Beings whatſoever; but yet, if not a creature, what then is he? can we think, under another denomination, the ſame Being with God himſelf; no ſurely, that is utterly impoſſible too, for then in effect he would really be nothing at all; nay, and, according to that, God could not be ſaid to have begotten any thing at all; if then he cannot in

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any reason be said to be a creature, nor to be individually the same Being with God, it surely remains that we say, that he is, as I have before said, really and truly God in the sense of generation; in this sense he may in reason be conceived to be, but in any other, not, not I mean according to human reason, all this seems to be agreeable to sound and good reason; and if it can still be farther proved, that revelation concurs with it, surely then it will, in the highest degree, be satisfactory to all mankind; but that it does so shall be my business to demonstrate. We find then in the Scriptures the Son is in divers places stiled God, and as he is, it cannot in reason be imagined it can possibly be in any other sense than is before laid down; in the Supreme sense it cannot be, for in that sense we have shewn that he is not God, and if he is not in that sense so, it surely cannot be said in any other than in way of generation; and that this, and this only, is the true and proper sense that he is stiled God in, I will undertake farther to prove from the first chapter of St John's Gospel, verse the first: It will, I know, be thought very strange that I should bring this text to prove my doctrine by, because this is generally thought the strongest text in the Bible to prove the Supreme Divinity of the Son;

but notwithſtanding that, I doubt not from it to prove that the Son is there ſtyled God in the ſenſe of generation only. In order to make good my aſſertion, I will undertake to give an expoſition of that text, and in the doing of it, I will, I call the great ſearcher of hearts to witneſs, be ſtrictly and religiouſly faithful; for to do otherwiſe, I hold to be a moſt horrid and grievous ſin: Nay, and I am perſuaded what this Apoſtle in the laſt chapter of the Revelations ſays, is applicable to all that wreſt or pervert Scripture. "I teſtify, *ſays he*, unto every "man that heareth the words of the pro-"phecy of this book, If any man ſhall add "unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto "him the plagues that are written in this "book: and if any man ſhall take away "from the words of the book of this pro-"phecy, God ſhall take away his part out "of the book of life, and out of the holy "city, and from the things which are "written in this book," and to pervert or wreſt Scripture, I take to be all one as adding to or diminiſhing any thing from it; notwithſtanding theſe terrible words, I am afraid, to ſerve a cauſe, it has been frequently done; but, let who will venture to do it, I am reſolved, that neither in this text that I am now going to expound,

pound, nor in any other that I shall hereafter have occasion to mention, I will not.

THIS being premised, I come to the point in hand, the words are these, "In "the beginning was the Word, and the "Word was with God, and the Word was "God." By the Word no doubt the Son is meant; this Word or Son was in the beginning; by the beginning I apprehend is meant the beginning of the creation of this world, and the reasons why I take it so are, because at the third verse it is said, and that I think alluding to this beginning, that "All things were made by him; and "that without him was not any thing "made that was made;" and again, at the tenth verse it is said that "He was in "the world, and the world was made by "him, and the world knew him not;" for these reasons, and because besides Moses uses the same term in the first of Genesis, and first verse, I am of opinion, that by the beginning is meant the beginning of the creation of this world; this Word or Son being thus in the beginning, was, 'tis said, with God; that by the God with whom the Word or Son was, is meant the one only and true God, the God that has his Being from none; the God that by necessity of nature is wholely, of, in, and from

himſelf, and is ſelf-exiſtent, unoriginated, underived, independent, is not by any one denied; and, as it is not, we have no more to do than to take this ſingle point into conſideration, *viz.* Whether the Word or Son that is laſt mentioned, and is ſaid to be God, and to be with the afore-mentioned God, is to be underſtood to be God in the ſame ſenſe as the God is with whom he is ſaid to be; it is generally held that he is; but I, on the contrary, ſay, that he is not; and to prove what I ſay to be true will be a very eaſy taſk; for if thoſe properties which we have before aſcribed to the God with whom the Word or Son was, and which no one denies are due to him, can be juſtly and truly aſcribed to the Word or Son, who the Apoſtle alſo ſays is God; then moſt certainly it is meant that they are both in the ſame ſenſe God; but if otherwiſe, as certainly not, the properties aſcribed to the God with whom the Word or Son was are theſe, that he has his Being from none, that he is by neceſſity of nature wholely, of, in, and from himſelf, ſelf-exiſtent, unoriginated, underived, independent; but now will any one ſay, that any one of theſe properties can be juſtly aſcribed to the Word or Son, if no one can ſay this, as to be ſure juſtly no one can, it, without all doubt, neceſſarily and unavoid-

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ably follows, that the Apoſtle in ſtiling the Word, or Son, God, did not mean to ſay that he was ſo in the ſame ſenſe, as he, with whom the Word or Son was, but in the ſenſe of generation only. There is alſo a farther conſequence to be drawn from theſe premiſes, *viz.* That ſince it is proved that they are not God in the ſame ſenſe, that they therefore ſurely muſt alſo be diſtinct and ſeparate Beings; ſo diſtinct and ſeparate as for one to be God Supreme, the other to be God in a ſubordinate ſenſe, or in way of generation only; but this may yet ſtill, from the words of the text, be farther proved; as thus, the Word or Son is ſaid to be with God, but ſurely, if with him, he muſt be another, and not the ſame, for otherwiſe, to ſay, would be direct contradiction and nonſenſe. I have yet one thing more to obſerve from the text, and it is ſo ſignificant, that, if heedfully attended to, will of itſelf be ſufficient to ſatisfy any truly wiſe and good man, that the two Beings mentioned in the text, and ſtiled God, cannot in the ſame ſenſe be ſo; and it is in the manner of expreſſion, I ſay, in the manner of expreſſion, for in that there certainly may be ſeen a note of eminency in a high degree in the one above the other; the Word or Son, it is ſaid, was with God, there ſurely is in this expreſſion a very

ſtrong emphaſis; for, no doubt, it is as much as to ſay that he was with the higheſt and greateſt, with the One only and true God, and with the God who only is by neceſſity of nature. Such, it is with this God, the Word or Son, who, as being generated from him, is alſo God, was, and the occaſion of his being with him, as may be collected from the text, was this, That Almighty God being then about creating this world, he took the Word or Son with him in order to make him his agent for the work; for the Apoſtle particularly in this very place, tells us, that the world was made by him, and again, more particularly that all things were made by him, and that without him was not any thing made that was made.

I HAVE done with my expoſition of this text, and whether it is juſtly and truly done or not, is very cheerfully and willingly ſubmitted to the judgment of all truly wiſe learned and good men; for my own part, I muſt own, I have the better opinion of it, becauſe reaſon, as we have before ſhewn, in a high degree, correſponds with it; if it is juſtly done, I do not ſee that there is any neceſſity to proceed any farther in this work; for the principal things in all this controverſy are determined by it; God the Father is by it fully proved to be only Supreme;

Supreme; the Son is proved in way of generation to be God, and that they are distinct and separate Beings, in opposition to their being One only is also fully proved; but least this may not be thought to be sufficient, I will in the same manner go on as if nothing hitherto had been said, and in particular, prove every thing that I shall touch upon; and that, as near as I can, shall be every individual thing that in this doctrine is disputable.

The principal thing that will be objected against what has been hitherto said, I expect will be in the notion that I have advanced of there being two Gods: To this I have this to say, that in respect of the Son's being God; I say no more than what every one says, for all hold he is God as well as I, all the difference lies only in the manner of conceiving it; on the other side, it is said, that he is not only God, but even God Supreme, and in every respect equal to God the Father; nay, and that there is such a union betwixt them, as for them to make one Being or God only; and I on the contrary hold, that he is God, but neither Supreme, nor equal to his Father, nor neither that there is such a union betwixt them, as for them to make only one Being or God. The substance of all this

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controverſy lying in theſe two points, I ſhall therefore particularly theſe diſcuſs; and, if I can, to the ſatisfaction of all wiſe and good men, prove that both the above mentioned tenets are erroneous: I hope then what I have advanced will be received for true and orthodox.

WITH the firſt of theſe, *viz.* to prove that the Son is not God ſupreme nor equal to his Father, I begin, and that will bring me to the deſcription I promiſed to give of the Son, That then the Son is not God ſupreme, *&c.* even my text in ſtiling him a Mediator ſtrongly proves, for the character or office of a Mediator is by no means compatible to the character of the moſt high God; but, on the contrary, is infinitely unworthy of him, to apply this character to God the Father would ſurely be little leſs than blaſphemy; and yet if the Son, as is contended for, is God ſupreme, and equal to his Father, how, for God's ſake, can it properly or innocently be given any more to him than to God the Father. The Father I have before obſerved, has his Being from none, but is by neceſſity of nature wholely of, in, and from, himſelf, and ſelf-exiſtent; but this of the Son, as is alſo before obſerved, is by none affirmed, nay, all own that he had his Being in way of generation from

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God his Father. The Father correſpondently to this, our Lord ſays, has life in himſelf, but the Son has it only as it was given him by the Father. The Son, of himſelf, ſays, has all power both in heaven and earth; and again, he ſays, that even all that the Father has are his, but ſtill all was given him of the Father, for inherently, of, in, and from himſelf, he frequently owns he never had any thing at all, no, nor could do nothing at all. The Son at the laſt great day will judge all mankind, but it is by virtue of a commiſſion from his Father, and ſo he himſelf in theſe words ſays, "The Father, ſays he, "judgeth no man, but hath commit-"ed all judgment to the Son," to the Son all the communicable attributes of God are aſcribed, but though ſo, no one yet can ſay, that he was poſſeſſed of any one of them, any other ways than by derivation from God his Father. The Son in many places of ſcripture is ſtiled God, and ſo by generation he ſurely is, but becauſe he is not from himſelf, and ſelf-exiſtent, *&c.* but has a cauſe of his Being, Supreme to be ſure he cannot be. I could go on and name many other things to ſhew that the Son is not God ſupreme, nor equal to his Father; but what I have named, one would think, ſhould be ſufficient to convince and ſatisfy any man living, for any one, after all that has been ſaid, not to

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be satisfied, must say no less than this, that the Son, though inherently he has not one individual thing in himself, but derived even his very Being, and even every thing else that ever he was possessed of, from his Father, is yet as great as his Father, who not only gave him every thing, but that, who besides, has inherently and by necessity of nature every thing in himself; if this can possibly be, then it may be owned that the Son is God supreme, and equal to his Father, but if not, then, surely, not. I have much more to say upon this subject, but before I proceed any farther, I must desire my reader to stop a little, and with me admire the amazing, wonderful, and astonishing greatness of the Son our Mediator; for, according to that short and very imperfect description that has been made of him, we see that, by the donation of God his Father, he has all power both in heaven and earth, nay, and that even all the Father hath are his; that at the last great day he will judge all mankind, that by derivation and communication from God his Father, he is possessed of all the attributes of God, and even to bear the very title of God, nay, and in way of generation actually so to be; all this surely renders him so great, as is beyond all words to express, and all thoughts to conceive, but still, after all, that he, from whom

whom he received all that he has, is greater, one would think, ſhould be impoſſible by any one to be denied. All this greatneſs of the Son ſeems to be added to him, and to be over and above what he had before his incarnation, for it was after his reſurrection, and not before, that he told his diſciples, that all power in heaven and earth was given unto him: and the Apoſtle St *Paul*, in the fifteenth chapter of the firſt epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, treating of the reſurrection, to this purpoſe alludes, Then, ſays he, *viz.* after the reſurrection, cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the kingdom, that is, this world, to God even the Father: this kingdom here mentioned ſeems by the Son to be received from the Father, and by the Father to be given to him, particularly in conſideration of the ſufferings he underwent by his taking human nature upon him, and thereby becoming our Mediator, he goes on, when he ſhall have put down all rule and all authority and power, for he muſt reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet, and the laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is death, for he hath put all things under his feet; but when he ſaith all things are put under him, it is manifeſt that he, *viz.* the Father, is excepted, becauſe he was the principal, the Son, the inſtrument only, which did put all things under him, and when, as

he goes on, all things ſhall by him, *viz.* the Father, be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject unto him, that put all things under him, that God, *viz.* the Father, may be all in all; from all which it ſeems very plain, as was before obſerved, that the Son by becoming incarnate, has an acceſſion of honour and glory added to him more than he had before his incarnation, he has all power both in heaven and earth given unto him, and a kingdom, even all this world is given to him as a recompence of his becoming incarnate; from whence I infer, that he ſurely therefore cannot be God Supreme, for, as ſuch, no addition of greatneſs or happineſs can poſſibly be; but beſides this, if he was God Supreme, how can he be ſaid either to receive a kingdom from God the Father, or deliver it up again, can God Supreme receive any thing, or again deliver it up, or diveſt himſelf of any thing, but, as it goes on, when all rule, and all authority, and power, was, not, by the way, principally by himſelf, but by God the Father brought under and ſubdued to the Son, then ſhall the Son alſo himſelf be ſubject to God the Father, that he may be all in all? What, ſhall the Son, who is ſaid to be God Supreme, be ever ſubject, ſurely, if he was really God Supreme, that would be utterly impoſſible, ſay all this that here

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is ſaid of the Son, of God the Father, and ſee, if I may be allowed to expreſs it ſo, how it will ſound.

AFTER all that has been ſaid to prove that the Son is not God Supreme, nor equal to his Father, I have yet to offer two or three proofs more, and after that I ſhall have done; the firſt is, St *Paul*, who in the fourth chapter of the *Epheſians*, *ver.* 5, 6. in theſe plain words ſays, that there is "one "Lord, one faith, one baptiſm, one God "and Father of all, who is above all, and "through all, and in you all," that the Lord here mentioned is the Son, will to be ſure by none be denied, and if it will not, then no doubt the one God and Father of all, is, becauſe the Apoſtle expreſsly ſays ſo, above him; or, which is all one, is greater than him, and he conſequently not equal to his Father; this I ſay is moſt certainly ſo, and not barely ſo neither, but even emphatically ſo, in ſuch a manner ſo, as if the Apoſtle had levelled the words particularly ſo as to take in our Lord only, the one God and Father of all is above all, but more eſpecially the one Lord; this I ſay, he ſeems to mean, becauſe no other perſon in the verſe is mentioned but him only. If all this will not ſatisfy, I have yet one authority more to offer in proof that the Father is greater

than the Son, and it is I am ſure above all the authorities that can be named, for it is no leſs than our Lord himſelf, who poſitively in expreſs terms tells us, that his Father is greater than him; and again, That greater is he that ſends, than he that is ſent.

THO' I think what is hitherto ſaid does in the higheſt degree prove that our Lord is not God Supreme, nor equal to his Father, yet I ſhall give one proof more, and it is ſuch a one, that tho' I do not think equal to what is already ſaid, yet to me is ſuch, that tho' there was no other, it would, I muſt confeſs, ſtagger me very much, it is concerning the duty of prayer, than which duty I know of none whereby we ſo much recognize God, nor none therefore that is ſo ſtrongly and frequently in the holy ſcriptures inculcated and preſſed upon us to perform to almighty God, I ſay to perform to almighty God, and would no doubt, if the Son was God Supreme and equal to him, be as often required from us to be performed to him. But yet this is ſo far from being enjoined us, that there is not one text in the whole Bible that requires any ſuch thing from us, but rather the very contrary.

HAVING, as I think, fully and largely proved that the Son is not God Supreme, nor

equal

equal to his Father, I come in the ſecond place to prove that he is not ſo united to his Father, as for them both to make one Being or God only; but this, if what is heedfully obſerved, I think is already proved; for, at the beginning of this diſcourſe is ſhewed, that the two Perſons mentioned in the text cannot be one and the ſame Being, becauſe it could not by any one be ſaid that they are convertible, ſo as for the one God to be termed a Mediator, or conſequently for the Mediator to be God Supreme, becauſe they are by the conjunction, *and*, contradiſtinguiſhed; and as this cannot be affirmed, it muſt no doubt follow, that they are diſtinct and ſeparate Beings; and beſides it is there alſo ſhewn, that by comparing their characters together, there would be found in that reſpect ſo great a difference betwixt them, as to be impoſſible for them to be one and the ſame Being, and this, tho' there only ſaid, is afterwards, I am confident, abundantly proved the ſame thing, *viz.* that they are diſtinct and ſeparate Beings, is, I think, very fully alſo proved in my expoſition of the firſt verſe of St *John*'s goſpel; but becauſe great ſtreſs is laid upon this, I will, tho' very briefly ſomething farther conſider it, and this I ſhall do by ſhewing that it implies a downright contradiction, and if affirming that one whilſt it is only ſo, can

at the ſame time be two; or, on the contrary, to ſay that two, whilſt ſo, can be one only; if, I ſay, affirming this is not abſolutely impoſſible, and withal contradiction and nonſenſe, nothing ſurely can be ſo; if the ſcriptures notwithſtanding in plain terms had told us ſo, I have that veneration for them, that I would, tho' ſo very contrary to my reaſon, yet believe it, but believe it upon human authority, I am ſure I never will; if it be ſaid that it is to be found in the ſcriptures, I utterly deny it, and before I have done with this diſcourſe, I will undertake to prove it too. But ſtill after all, if this was poſſible to be true, *viz.* that there was ſuch a union of the Father and the Son as is contended for; this, which ſurely is horrible and ſhocking to ſay, would unavoidably follow, *viz.* that God would not be a ſimple, which above all things he ſurely is, but really a compounded, Being, for ſo two in conjunction no doubt is and cannot be otherwiſe.

AND now having finiſhed what I undertook to do, and proved that the Son is not God Supreme, nor equal to his Father; nor that there is ſuch a union betwixt them as to make them one Being or God only; it muſt, no doubt, undeniably follow that God the Father alone is abſolutely and above

above all Supreme; and that the Son, tho' God, is no otherwise so than in a subordinate sense, and in way of generation only.

In opposition to what has been hitherto done, I expect it will be said that there are many texts of Scripture that strongly prove in favour of the Supreme Divinity of the Son, and unless satisfaction can be given with respect to them, all that has been said will not be enough; this, supposing there are any such, is, I confess, very reasonable to be taken under consideration; but, for my part, I must confess, I do not know of one such in the whole Bible; some there are I know, that to this purpose are pretended; but being fairly examined, I dare say, will every one of them make much stronger against than any ways for what they are brought, it will be an endless work to take under consideration all the texts that may to this purpose be brought: I hope therefore, if I produce a few of the most considerable, and such as are chiefly insisted upon, and fully and fairly answer them, that that will be allowed to be sufficient; in the doing of this I shall not need to mention any of those texts wherein the Son is stiled God, because, though I grant that there are many such, yet withal, I insist

upon

upon it, that he is in none of them ſtiled in the Supreme ſenſe ſo, but as he is by generation God.

OF the other kind of texts, the firſt I ſhall take under conſideration is taken out of the tenth chapter of St John's Goſpel, where our Lord ſays, "I and my Father are "One;" now, though our Lord has in the ſeventeenth chapter of this Goſpel, very particularly and largely explained himſelf to mean by theſe words no more, than that they are one in inclination, affection, and diſpoſition; yet, on the other ſide, it is univerſally held, that a perſonal union is meant; but if that ſhould be allowed to be the meaning of the words, it will follow, that not only our Lord himſelf is perſonally united to God his Father, but that too all his Diſciples, nay, and even all the followers alſo of his Diſciples, are perſonally united to him; for our Lord at the eleventh verſe of this ſeventeenth chapter, thus prays, Holy Father, ſays he, keep through thine own name thoſe, *viz.* his Diſciples, whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are; and again, at the twentieth verſe, he thus prays, Neither, ſays he, pray I for theſe alone, but for all them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one as thou Father art in me,

and

and I in thee; from all which, it is moſt certain, that theſe words of our Lord, *viz.* I and my Father are one, are not to be taken in the ſenſe of a perſonal union, or if they are, it muſt extend ſo far as to take in all his diſciples; nay, and even all the followers of his diſciples alſo, which to be ſure no one will ſay, and yet if not, then ſurely neither can it be ſaid, that our Lord in ſaying I and my Father are one, meant, in ſo ſaying, a perſonal union; all this, I think, is very clear and certain; but if the ſenſe contended for is in the way of reaſon conſidered, it ſurely will be very ſtrange indeed; for certainly it cannot imply any thing leſs than a downright contradiction; for ſuppoſing they are one only, they ſurely cannot poſſibly be two, neither if two, can they poſſibly be but one, this, if any thing can be contradiction and nonſenſe, is moſt certainly ſo.

Of kin to the foregoing is that text in the firſt epiſtle of St John, chap. five, "There are three that bear record in heaven, "the Father, the Word, and the Holy "Ghoſt, and theſe three are one;" one in conſent, harmony, and concord, no doubt, but otherwiſe moſt certainly three; but that this is a ſpurious interpolated text, has, by many learned men, been ſo ſtrongly and

fully proved, that I dare ſay very few or none of the truly learned will inſiſt upon it; I myſelf have read many good reaſons proving it to be ſo; three of which I only remember; but thoſe, though no other could be given, are, I think, ſufficient in a good meaſure to ſatisfy any unprejudiced perſon whatſoever; it was not, my author ſays, till of late years inſerted in the body of our Bibles, but in the margin only, and that in different characters too; a ſecond reaſon is, that it is not to be met with in any manuſcript; the third reaſon is, that in all the Arian controverſy, it was never by the contrary ſide brought in proof; a certain ſign ſurely, that it was not then in their Bibles, for if it had, ſo material a text would not to be ſure have eſcaped them; but, on the contrary, would have been ſtrongly and loudly inſiſted upon.

THE next text that I ſhall take under conſideration is in theſe words, taken out of the ſecond chapter of the Philippians, they are thus, in the foregoing verſe, uſhered in, "Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus; who, as it follows, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" this text is thought by many to be an unanſwerable proof of the equality of the Son with

with his Father; but yet before I have done with it, I doubt not, taking the context into the account, to make it appear that the very reverſe is meant; the text itſelf is in the ſixth verſe, but to come at the true ſenſe of the words, it will be neceſſary with them to ſet down the five following verſes, which with the text itſelf are thus, " Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men: and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Croſs. Wherefore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue ſhould confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Father;" in theſe words the Son, without all doubt, is repreſented as very great indeed; ſo great, as in the firſt part of this ſcripture to be in the form of God, and to think it no robbery to be equal with God; the two following verſes ſets forth to us his profound humility, which was ſo great, that though he was in the form of God, and

thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he made himſelf of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a ſervant, and to be made in the likeneſs of men, and being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs; the only thing to be conſidered, is what ſenſe is to be put upon theſe words, *viz.* "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:" the words, I confeſs, in my opinion, ſound as if they had a literal meaning, but though ſo, nothing yet is more certain than that they cannot, by what follows, be ſo underſtood; for at the ninth and tenth verſes it is thus ſaid, "Wherefore, *i. e.* in conſideration of his great humility, God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" now if the words were to be taken literally, theſe things now mentioned could never in any manner of congruity be ſaid of him; for how could God, of his equal, ſay, he had highly exalted him; or how could he that was equal to God be exalted higher than he was before; or how could God give him that was his equal, a name which is above every name; ſurely that, as an equal, he had

had before; in truth, if God was his equal only, he could not properly be ſaid to give him a high name, or any thing elſe, for every thing would be in himſelf, and in his own power; it follows, "that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" all this alſo is wholely conferred upon him by God; in ſhort, there is not a word in all this paſſage of ſcripture but proves inſtead of his equality in the higheſt degree, his inequality with God; let all things be weighed and duly conſidered, and no one will, or can, with any colour of reaſon, ſay, that the Son, who, by the Apoſtle, is ſaid to be in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; I ſay, that the Apoſtle, by theſe words, could poſſibly mean that in a literal ſenſe he was ſo; what the true meaning of the words is, is not eaſy to ſay; the beſt ſenſe I can think of is, that the Apoſtle in ſaying them alludes to his Sonſhip, that as a ſon may in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be equal to his father; ſo our Lord, as a Son, may, though otherwiſe infinitely unequal, be yet properly ſaid to be even equal to his Father; but whether a true or proper ſenſe can be found out or not, is not very material; it is enough for us to know, that whatever it is, it cannot

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for certain in the literal ſenſe be meant it in the laſt verſe follows, " that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Theſe words are an undeniable confirmation and proof of all that has been before ſaid, that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, this, *viz.* that he is Lord, is all the inference that is made by the Apoſtle of him, that he before ſaid was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but ſurely, if in a literal ſenſe he had really meant, that he was ſo, his inference would have been, that every tongue ſhould confeſs that he was God Supreme; but it is moſt certain, that no more is inferred than that he is Lord, and even that neither is not ultimately to be aſcribed to his glory, but to the glory of God the Father.

THE laſt text that I ſhall take under conſideration is taken out of the fifth chapter of St *John*'s goſpel, verſe 23, where our Lord of himſelf in theſe words ſays, " That " all men ſhould honour the Son, even as " they honour the Father. He that ho- " noureth not the Son, honoureth not the " Father which hath ſent him." Theſe words for the ſupremacy and equality of the Son with the Father, are for that purpoſe very

very much urged and insisted upon, but with how little reason I doubt not presently to shew. "That all men," says our Lord, "should honour the Son, even as "they honour the Father. He that ho-"noureth not the Son, honoureth not the "Father which hath sent him." The main stress, by those that bring this text, is chiefly laid upon the former part of the verse, but as I shall, when I come to consider them, shew it more principally, and especially ought to be laid upon the latter, those that contend for the former sense thus expound them, "That all men should ho-"nour the Son, even," *i. e.* in as high and an unlimited a degree, "as they honour the "Father;" and this they should do, because that he is in all respects equal to his Father; but to make good this, they must thus say, is the Father the One only and true God, so is the Son; is the Father from none, self-existent, unoriginated, underived, independent, so is the Son; is the Father Supreme, so is the Son; is the Father Almighty, so is the Son; is prayer to be made to the Father, so also it is to be to the Son; all this upon supposition, that the Son is equal, or even as his Father they must say; but that the words were not by our Lord spoken, or ever by him meant to be so understood, I shall now beyond all contra-

diction

diction prove, they were not, I ſay, ſo ſpoken, becauſe none of thoſe things above-mentioned which are ſaid of the Father can with truth be ſaid of the Son; the Son I have proved, if any thing can be proved, is ſo far from being the One only and true God, that he is God by generation only, and conſequently the One only and true God he is not; to ſay of the Son that he is from none, or that he is ſelf-exiſtent, *&c.* is ſo far from being true, that all the very contrary hold to be true, for all allow that he was of the Father begotten; to ſay the Son is Supreme, is alſo undeniably proved not to be true; to ſay of the Son that he is Almighty is not true, for the ſcripture no where ſays he is ſo, therefore ſurely we ought not; to ſay prayer ought to be made to the Son is not true, for there is not a ſingle text in the whole Bible that ſays we ſhould do ſo, but rather the very contrary; if to all this we conſider what is ſaid of the Son in the verſe preceding the text, we ſhall find that the ſenſe contended for cannot be true; for there it is thus ſaid, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed "all judgment to the Son;" but now if the Son was really and truly in the ſenſe contended for, even as his Father, he would in himſelf have this privilege, and have no occaſion of having it committed to him by his Father,

Father; nay, in ſtrictneſs and propriety of ſpeech, the Father could neither be ſaid, the Son being his equal, either to commit this judgment to him, or the Son to receive it from him; as therefore this was done by the Father, it muſt neceſſarily follow that he is ſuperior, and the Son inferior; in the latter part of the verſe it is ſaid, "That he that "honoureth not the Son, honoureth not "the Father which hath ſent him;" but how in reaſon can it be conſiſtent, that he that in any meſſage or employment is ſent, can poſſibly be thought to be equal to him that ſends him; our Lord, I am ſure, is not of that opinion, for he, on the contrary, in plain terms tells us, "That greater is he "that ſends, than he that is ſent."

I SHALL upon this part of the text ſay no more, and I hope what is ſaid, will, to the judicious part of mankind, be abundantly ſufficient to ſhew, that the unlimited ſenſe of the words is by no means the true; it remains that I ſhew what is the true ſenſe of them, which I ſhall do, by conſidering, not a part of the verſe only, but the whole, and that I take to be this, and I dare ſay after I have ſet it down, and is well conſidered of, I ſhall have few or none to diſagree with me. The words I take to be principally in way of admonition directed to the

Jews, and among them very probably, more eſpecially the Phariſees, theſe men were continually and upon all occaſions thwarting, deriding, contemning, and degrading him; to warn them therefore of their ſin and danger of ſo doing, our Lord tells them, "That all men ſhould honour "the Son, even as they honour the Father. "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth "not the Father which hath ſent him;" as much as to ſay, you Jews and Phariſees are guilty of a great ſin in thus diſhonouring me as you do, you ought as I am ſent by the Father to honour me even as the Father, but you are ſo far from doing it, that, on the contrary, you do in all things continually diſhonour me; this I take to be the plain ſenſe of the words, and if it is, nothing is more certain than that the principal thing our Lord in them charges, as a fault, theſe people with, is, as I at the beginning of this diſcourſe upon theſe words obſerved, principally and chiefly, not that they did not enough honour him, but that they actually in a high degree continually diſhonoured him, and their ſin in ſo doing was no doubt therein much the greater; they ought indeed as he was in the nature of an ambaſſador ſent by the Father poſitively to honour him, even as the Father himſelf, but inſtead of that directly to diſhonour him was ſurely a

high aggravation of their ſin. As to the word *even*, which my opponents would have to ſignify an abſolute equality betwixt the Father and the Son, there is certainly no colour for; for beſides the reaſons already given againſt it, the very words themſelves plainly require another ſenſe; for the reaſon why our Lord ſhould be honoured, *even* as the Father, is not becauſe he was in himſelf equal to the Father, but becauſe, as an ambaſſador, he was ſent by him, and as ſuch therefore he ought to be honoured by them, even as the Father himſelf; whoſoever therefore did not do it, no doubt in the ſtricteſt ſenſe diſhonoured God the Father that ſent him.

THESE are all the texts that I think proper or needful to take under conſideration, whether they are juſtly and fairly expounded or not, muſt be left to the reader; but if they are, I know not what more can be done either to explode the doctrine I oppoſe, or to eſtabliſh my own, for I think their chief ſtrength lies in theſe. If I could have thought of any that are more relied on than theſe, I would not have declined them, for by the advantage of ſo good a cauſe, I would not doubt of being able to have given a reaſonable ſatisfaction in them.

I KNOW not what, with reference to the Son, to ſay more than I have; and as to the third Perſon in that which is by men called one of the Trinity, but by God never ſo, I am not by my text warranted to take under conſideration; but yet rather than my diſcourſe ſhall be defective, I will, though in ſtrictneſs I break through rule and method, ſay ſomething of him, though as briefly yet as ever I can. He is by men called God the Holy Ghoſt, but by himſelf in the holy Oracles, not; neither is there to be found any conſiderable acts properly majeſterial done by him, but chiefly miniſterial; he is ſaid to proceed from God the Father, but in what manner is not revealed, and as it is not, we cannot know; he is in very many places ſaid to be ſent by God the Father, and in ſome few even by the Son alſo; but though by the Son he is ſaid to be ſent, he is no where ſaid to proceed from him, and therefore to be ſure he did not, indeed to ſay that he did is little leſs, if any thing at all, than a contradiction; becauſe the Son, as has been ſhewn, inherently in himſelf, never had any thing at all, but derived even his very Being, and every thing elſe that ever he was poſſeſſed of, from God the Father; how then the Holy Ghoſt can poſſibly be ſaid to proceed from him, that never had

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any thing of his own, is ſurely not to be conceived. The ſcriptures do not ſay much of this Perſon, we are told that he is in himſelf a holy Spirit, and that it is from him that all that ſanctification and holineſs that is to be found in any of us do proceed, and that whenſoever we reſiſt his good ſuggeſtions and motions, we grieve him and quench the Spirit; we are commanded to be baptized in his name, which ſhews him to be very great, and to be in dignity in the hierarchy of heaven the third; but to be God Supreme there is ſurely no colour for, there being, as was noted before, not one ſingle text in all the Bible to diſtinguiſh him as ſuch; and, as there is not, how he can be acknowledged ſuch, is ſurely very ſtrange and unaccountable. There is indeed one paſſage in ſcripture alledged for his being ſo ſtiled, but with how little reaſon it is ſaid, a fair examination will make appear, the paſſage is in the fifth chapter of the *Acts*, where are theſe words, " Ananias," ſaith the Apoſtle *Peter* to him, " why hath Satan filled thine heart " to lie to the Holy Ghoſt. —— Why haſt " thou conceived this thing in thine heart? " thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto " God;" from theſe words only, the Holy Ghoſt is acknowledged to be no leſs than even God Supreme; a very ſlender foundation ſurely to lay ſo mighty a building upon;

for

for if the words by any artful man could possibly be brought to infer so much from them as is contended for, as there is this only text to this purpose in all the Bible, it surely would be very dangerous and unsafe to lay so very much upon it; but supposing all the art of man cannot at last do it, what then will be said? for my own part I cannot, nor will not say what, but to think what may be said, I confess makes me tremble; as to the words I have tried all I can to turn them into a syllogism, but, for my part, I own, I cannot do it, and I think it is not fairly and properly to be done by any one; and, as it is not, I will consider the words in the sense as they are generally taken in, and this I will do, so as to favour the sense contended for as much as ever I can; afterwards we shall see what can be made out of them, "Ananias," says the Apostle, "why "hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the "Holy Ghost,——thou hast not lied unto "men, but unto God;" a lie in the former part of the words is said to be told to the Holy Ghost, in the latter the same lie is said to be told to God, therefore it is said the Holy Ghost is stiled God: what, stiled God, because the same lie that is told to God is told to the Holy Ghost? where for God's sake is there either connexion or consequence in this; if this will pass with wise and learned

learned men for reaſon, ſurely any thing will; let us try how in a like caſe it will do. Suppoſe the Apoſtle had put the words thus, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to an Angel, and then afterwards ſay, as he does, thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God; would any one ſay that the inference would be that the Angel would be ſtiled God? no ſurely, but why not, the conſequence ſurely would be the very ſame, and as good as to ſay ſo of the Holy Ghoſt; as for my own part, I know no difference betwixt one and the other, but only this, that the one, people are willing to fancy, though without any manner of proof, to be God, and the other, not; and becauſe they fancy ſo, they are reſolved to have it ſo; it is a matter very much to be lamented, that things of ſo high a nature as this is, and where the honour of God and his true Chriſtian religion are ſo much concerned, are not more narrowly examined and looked into, as long as our Faith, I ſpeak it with real grief of heart, ſtands upon the footing it now does, it cannot ſurely be expected that ever either *Jews* or other Infidels will ever be brought over to our holy religion. Having rejected as inconcluſive the ſenſe by others given to this paſſage of ſcripture which we have been now examining, I will try if I can ſubſtitute a better in the room of

of it: Why, ſays the Apoſtle to Ananias, hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt; in theſe words a lie is ſaid to be made to the Holy Ghoſt, but how was it made, was it let me aſk, immediately or mediately made, not ſurely immediately but mediately, for in truth the lie was immediately and directly told to men, and to the Holy Ghoſt, no otherwiſe than as that holy Spirit dwelt in them; if then it was only mediately and indirectly told to the Holy Ghoſt, and more immediately and directly to theſe men told, ſurely then the Holy Ghoſt is no more than remotely or accidentally brought in; and if ſo, the Apoſtle had no need in ſumming the whole matter up to make mention of him any more, but directly at the concluſion to make it lie, as it really and properly did, between God and men; and ſo accordingly in thus ſaying he does, thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto God; as much as to ſay thou thoughteſt, as we are men, to deceive us in what thou haſt done, and ſo poſſibly, if thou hadſt only us to deal with thou mighteſt eaſily have done; but the lie that thou haſt told is, comparatively ſpeaking, to us nothing at all, but to God, and he, and he only, is diſhonoured and affronted by it; and he therefore, though by our hands it is, that

puniſhes

punishes thee for it; this is all I shall say with reference to the Holy Ghost.

As to the Son it may be expected that I should, as our faith by what has been said is much altered from what it was, give some account what notion we should have of him, and what our duty respectively to him is; as, I think this is very proper to be done, I shall therefore in the best manner I can do it, taking my measures from the holy Scriptures only; but before I enter upon this, I shall do the same with relation to God the Father.

As to him, he is surely, and without all doubt, the spring, source, fountain, and original, not only of all Beings, but of every thing else, without whom there never had been any Son, any Holy Ghost, any Angels, any men, or any world: He, as the Apostle says, is All in All; All have their Beings from him, All live by him, and All depend upon him; All, in comparison of him are nothing at all; as he gave Being to all, so he can, if he pleases, take it away again; there is no Power in any Being whatsoever, but what is derived from him; so far as he gives Power to any they have it, but in the least degree farther no one can go; all perfections that are in any Be-

ings whatſoever are not in the Beings themſelves, but All come from him; it is from his inexhauſtible fulneſs all receive and are what they are and have. He is the God, not only of Angels and men, but even of the Son alſo; in the firſt chapter of St Paul to the Epheſians the Apoſtle thus ſays, "Bleſſed be the God and Father of our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt," and ſo again, in the ſame chapter, "That the God of our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt the Father of glory "may, *&c.*" again, in the firſt Epiſtle of St Peter, chapter firſt, "Bleſſed be the "God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "which, *&c.*" and in the twentieth chapter of St John's Goſpel our Lord himſelf, after his reſurrection, thus to Mary ſays, "Go unto my brethren, and ſay unto "them, I aſcend unto my Father and "your Father, and to my God and your "God;" in ſhort, he is all and every thing. He, the Apoſtle Paul in the fourth chapter to the Epheſians, ſays, "Is the "One God and Father of All, who is "above All, and through All, and in All." To this one only Supreme, Almighty, infinite and Eternal God, be aſcribed all poſſible Praiſe and Glory, Dominion and Power, Thankſgiving and Adoration by all Beings both in Heaven and Earth for ever and ever. *Amen.*

OUR

OUR duty to him is, to believe in him, to love and fear him, to put our whole trust in him, to serve, honour, and obey him; to pray unto him, and for all his wonderful and amazing mercies and favours continually, and every moment of our lives conferred upon us; to thank, glorify, and praise him withal our might, strength, and power, as long as we have our Beings, and even for ever and ever.

AS to the Son, He is the begotten Son of God most High, and Saviour of the world; he is by generation God, but otherwise not; he is the great Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate between God and men; by him God is reconciled to us; our sins for his sake and merits, upon true repentance, will be pardoned; and in the life to come, by means of him, we shall be everlastingly happy.

OUR duty to him is, to believe in him, *i. e.* to believe that he is the true and very Messias that should come into the world; if we do not do this, we can receive no benefit from him; he every where lays great stress upon this; the places in the Scriptures where he presses this upon us are very many; If you do not believe, says he, that

I am he, ye ſhall die in your ſins. We muſt be baptized in his name; Go, ſays he to his diſciples, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt; as he has loved us we ought to love him, and keep all his ſayings and commandments; Herein, ſays he, is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, *i. e.* be rich in good works, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples; there are three things which he more particularly commands; and thoſe are Love, Humility and Charity; as the aforementioned Love is from us due to him, this laſt is due to one another; Theſe things, ſays he, I command you, that you love one another; and again, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another; this in very many places of Scripture is in a high degree preſſed upon us. As to Humility, he thus ſays, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; and again, Whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf as a little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. And, as to Charity, or almſdeeds, he ſeems to lay ſo great a ſtreſs upon it, as if it was all that would be required from us; for at the great day of Judgment, thoſe that gave meat to the hungry,

hungry, and drink to the thirsty, that took in the stranger, that clothed the naked, that visited the sick, and those that were in prison; to these it will be said unto them, Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom; but as for those that did not these things, it will be said unto them, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; and these therefore shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the other into life eternal.

We must in the last place honour him, *i.e.* we must in our minds and hearts reverence him, have worthy and honourable thoughts of him; and in a grateful sense of what he has done and suffered for us, we must to others speak well and honourably of him; but though we must in this manner do all we can to set forth his honour, praise, and glory, we must not yet by any means pray unto him, for that I have several times before hinted, we must not do, because we are no where commanded in the Scriptures to do it; and that, though there was no other reason for our not doing it, is of itself sufficient; but I shall now, notwithstanding, give other reasons for our not doing it: I do not in the Scriptures indeed any where find a direct negative against

gainſt it; but though I do not, I think there are ſome paſſages in the Scriptures that amount almoſt to even a negative; we are, and that by himſelf, very often commanded to aſk the Father in his name, and this implies as much as even a negative; for ſurely, it is as much as to ſay, that we ought only to pray to the Father; but that when we do it, we muſt always remember to do it in his name. He is every where in the Scriptures ſaid to be our Mediator, Interceſſor, and Advocate; and as ſuch, ſurely, his buſineſs is to recommend both us and our prayers to God; and as this is his proper office, a negative with reſpect of our praying to him is ſurely implied; for if we make him the object of our prayers, he immediately ceaſes to be our Mediator; for he, at the ſame time, to act in both capacities, is no leſs than a contradiction. In the ſixteenth chapter of St John's Goſpel, this matter is by our Lord himſelf fully ſtated and explained; it begins at the twenty-third verſe, and is ſo near his Paſſion, that all that he there ſays cannot have reference to his then being on earth, but in heaven; "In that day, *viz.* when he was with his Father in heaven, Ye ſhall, ſays he, aſk me nothing, Verily verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall aſk the Father in my name he will give it you. Hitherto

therto have ye asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive;" and again, at the twenty-sixth verse, "At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God:" Every word in this passage of Scripture strongly and undeniably proves against our praying to our Saviour; it speaks of nothing but praying to his Father in his name; nay, it says that we should not ask of him; for, says he, "in that day ye shall ask of me nothing;" nay, he in effect farther says, that if there was occasion for it, he would even himself pray the Father for his disciples; but with respect particularly to them there was not; because, as they loved him, and believed he came out from God; therefore the Father himself loved them; had it not been for this reason, no doubt, he would have prayed the Father for them: the inference I make from all this, is this, that if our Saviour would, if there had been occasion for it, even in heaven have prayed the Father for his disciples, surely for our praying to him there can be no colour or pretence whatsoever; the doing it therefore, is surely most unwarrantable, and highly tending

tending to the dishonour of God the Father, to whom only prayer is due.

I DO not think of any thing material that is farther to be said upon this subject. A Trinity of Persons, no doubt, our Lord in the form of Baptism makes mention of; but of them there is most certainly but one, *viz.* the Father, that is truly and properly God; he is naturally so, having his Being from none; and is wholely of, in, and from, himself, self-existent, unoriginated, underived, independent; this cannot be said of any other Being whatsoever; therefore he only is to be acknowledged for God; but, he, we must acknowledge to be so; and that above all infinitely and absolutely Supreme. The Son is also God, but in a subordinate sense, *viz.* in way of generation only; the Holy Ghost is in no sense at all God, he is the Spirit of Sanctification, and holiness to us; and we are to be baptized in his name, and that is all; for offering up any prayer to him there is not the shadow of any precept in all the Gospel.

I HAVE now finished my whole work, and whosoever is not satisfied with what is done; all I shall say to him, shall be, to desire him to search the Scriptures; let him

him carefully do that, and then he will know whether the things that are here laid down are true or not; let him, I ſay, again ſearch them; but let no man be ſo mad or fooliſh; nay, and even impious, as to ſeek for information from any human authorities whatſoever; any one ſo doing, one would think, would be moſt certainly out of his ſenſes indeed; for have we not God himſelf to go to; and ſince we have in his holy Oracles him to go to, ſhall we leave him and go after men; God forbid: but as monſtrous yet as this is, it has for many ages paſt been the humour, and that of the learned part of the world too, to go after Fathers and School-men to get information of this doctrine; and to this is owing all that abſurdity and contradiction that is to be found in this doctrine, as it is now held among us, *viz.* That one ſhould be three, and three one, *&c.* A tenet ſurely as contrary to Scripture, as reaſon; in thoſe ſacred writings, I am ſure, no ſuch abſurdities and contradictions are to be found, they abhor all ſuch; by going after theſe men we have forſaken the Oracles of light and truth, and have ran into error and darkneſs, confuſion and nonſenſe; if this, in the higheſt degree, is not madneſs and and folly, ſurely nothing can be ſo; and not only ſo neither, but, as was ſaid be-

fore, it is horridly impious too; for is it not impious to prefer the writings of men to that of God; ſurely it is, and I verily believe God has been ſo diſpleaſed at it, that for our ſo doing, he has, in way of judgment permitted ſuch palpable errors ſo long to prevail in the world. This humour of thus ſlighting the Scriptures, to our reproach be it ſpoken, prevails almoſt among all ſorts of men; ſome through careleſſneſs and negligence, and ſome again through principle; ſo that, what through one motive or other, God's Book is had in ſuch contempt among us, as if it was fit to be read by none but weak men and children: to ſuch a degree of profaneneſs and irreligion are we arrived; as for the latter of theſe, who are diſtinguiſhed by the name of Deiſts; theſe men ſet up for the wits of the age; and, as ſuch, they think this Book too low and vulgar for their peruſal; and therefore, unleſs to find out ſomething to cavil at, they will have nothing to ſay to it; neither, they ſay, if they had, can they learn any thing from it; for their own reaſon will inform them in every thing as well as this Book; and to ſay it comes from God, they do not believe any ſuch thing; theſe men may think themſelves very wiſe, knowing, and learned; but if they are not really a very ſuperficial conceited

ceited ſort of men, or men of depraved morals, or both, I am very much miſtaken in them indeed; if I ſhould compare them to David's fool, who ſaid in his heart there is no God, I think, I ſhould not much wrong them; than ſuch a fool as David more than once takes notice of, ſurely there can hardly be a greater; for that there is a God any but a downright fool cannot ſurely be ignorant of; for let any but a fool look into himſelf, or all things round about him; let him look into things and creatures upon the earth; creatures in the ſea; creatures in the air, or even in the heavens; all, and every one of theſe in the plaineſt and moſt ſenſible manner prove, that there is a God and a Providence too; for, as they could not of themſelves come into Being; ſo neither could they after they were in Being, without a Divine Providence ſubſiſt in Being; a wiſe man in any one thing in all nature, all in themſelves are ſo very wonderful and ſtrange, will diſcover a God; but this ſtupid wretch is ſo great a fool, that he cannot diſcover him, even in all of them put them altogether; but ſtill ſays in his heart that there is no God. Our Deiſts are but little better than theſe; for God has given us a Book, which, for worth, beauty, and excellency, is invaluable; things of the higheſt nature and

consequence to us are contained in it; for in it we know, that after this life is ended, we shall in another, either in most direful misery, or in inconceivable happiness, subsist, and that to all eternity; and, because this in so high a degree concerns us, God in this Book, in the most lively manner, has made known to us the way and means of avoiding the one, and obtaining the other; and all this in such a stile as is infinitely surpassing all other books in the whole world; so that all things considered, no one can say, but that this book is in every respect worthy of even God for its author; and yet, after all, these Deists are so far from seeing any benefits accruing to them from it, any excellencies or beauties in it, that they even despise it: how such men as these, with so low a taste as all this, can set up for men of sense or wit, I cannot imagine; for my own part, I am so far from thinking so of them, that I see but little difference betwixt them and David's fool, who said in his heart there is no God; for these men, it is plain, have not wit or grace enough to see that the Hand of God is in this Book, though every body else almost does.

THERE is in the world a whole Church, and a Christian Church too it is by the Professors

Professors of it called, O amazing and wonderful! that actually under great penalties forbids its proselytes the use of this divine book; if it was not very notorious indeed that it does so, no one surely would believe it, for one would think the so doing would imply no less than a contradiction, because it is out of this book the whole Christian religion is known and taught, the whole true Christian religion no doubt is so, but whatever the professors of this Church may pretend to, I affirm that most part of what this Church teaches for doctrine, is so far from being truly Christian, that it is only the inventions of men, and that too so ill contrived, that out of twenty-four articles which they hold, twelve of them are directly contrary to the Christian religion, and at least one half of the other, as held by this Church, is notoriously false and untrue, though the rulers and governors of this Church are most surely horridly profane, and abominably wicked, and impious, in thus with-holding this most sacred book from their members; yet it must be owned, that they, in so doing, are in their generation wise in it; for if this book was in common to be read, peoples eyes would in time be so opened, that their Church would sink, the gross errors in it would be discovered,

covered, and the immenſe gain that is made by their pious frauds would be all loſt.

THERE is yet one ſort of people that I have before taken notice of, that I muſt, concerning this holy book, ſpeak to, and thoſe are the careleſs and the negligent; theſe in the main are ſatisfied that it came from God, and that in it are contained matters of the utmoſt importance to all mankind; and yet, which is very wonderful, they are careleſs, negligent, and indifferent, in the peruſing of it, notwithſtanding; but is this poſſible, can any one really think that this book came from God, and be indifferent towards it; there are books of only human compoſure that have been received with great applauſe, and have conſequently been very much read; but is it poſſible for any one to put a value upon ſuch a book as this, and not put an infinitely higher upon God's book: what, for God's ſake, is any man, or even all mankind, put them altogether, to God; or what book conſequently, though the wit of all mankind was put together in compoſing it, can bear any proportion in value to God's book, ſurely none at all; if an Angel was to give us a book of his compoſing, and we were ſure it was writ by him, we ſhould ſurely prize it very highly; for no doubt it would be very excellent; but

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though ſo, what yet again is an Angel, or even all the Angels of heaven, in compariſon of God; or what book could all theſe, put them altogether, write in compariſon of what God has done; ſurely all that they could do, would, in compariſon, be of no value; for all the Angels of heaven in compariſon of God are leſs than what to them a worm is; if all this is true, as denied, I am ſure, it cannot be by any man upon earth; how fooliſh, as well as horridly profane and impious are all ſuch as neglect this book of God; but if this is ſo with reſpect of thoſe that neglect it only, what is to be ſaid of thoſe that deride, contemn, and deſpiſe it; ſurely their ſin and folly in ſo doing, muſt be ſurpaſſingly great indeed.

I HAVE often conſidered with myſelf, what can be the true cauſe how it comes about that this book is ſo little eſteemed in the world; I am ſure, only in itſelf conſidered, it is incomparably valuable and excellent, and in a high degree worthy of God for its author; but, notwithſtanding this, we ſee that by a great part of mankind it is but little eſteemed; the principal reaſon why it is ſo, I am of opinion is, becauſe people in common do not thoroughly believe, as excellent, in itſelf, as it is, that yet God is the real and true author of it;

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for ſurely if they did, if they had that reverence for God as they ought to have, they would neceſſarily and of conſequence eſteem his book above all the treaſures upon earth; it is beſide my intention, in writing what I have done, to make any attempt to prove the divine authority of the holy ſcriptures; but however, ſince I have gone ſo far as I have, I will take upon me, for the ſatisfaction of the doubtful, to give one or two reaſons why God is the real and true author of them; one reaſon I will give for the Old Teſtament, and one more for the New; as for the Old Teſtament, we all ſee that the ſubject matter of them has a principal reference to the Jews, this people were in covenant with God, and being ſo, he took them them under his peculiar diſcipline, even as a king does his people, when they did well, he protected and bleſſed them, but when they ſinned againſt him, he chaſtiſed them, and in this manner he dealt with, and forbore with them for many ages, till at length upon their growing downright incorrigible, he threw them quite off, and put them upon the footing of all the reſt of the world; theſe ſcriptures from firſt to laſt are an hiſtorical account of the conduct of God towards them; the poſterity of this people are even now in Being, and that not only with us, but diſperſed too even all over

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the world, and as they are, they are certainly no less than living evidences of the truth of these writings, and that they came from God; for all things in these writings exactly correspond with the state, condition, and circumstances of this people that we now see; this book enjoins the Jews to observe many fasts and festivals; and withal appoints the particular days that they should be kept on, and these days, by those Jews, which are now in Being, are in all parts of the world, wheresoever they are dispersed, strictly observed; it is said in this book, that for the sins of this people, they should be dispersed all the world over, and so we see they are; but notwithstanding they are so dispersed, it is most certain, that ever since their return from their Babylonish captivity, which is upwards of 2250 years, they have been very exact and punctual in three things, they have, though before that captivity they were very prone to idolatry, yet ever since been stedfast to the acknowledgment of the true God; they have been very tenacious of their Sabbath and of their scriptures, of their Sabbath, whatever country they were driven to, they never failed to observe it, and on it, and all their holy days, to read some part of their scriptures, both the law and the prophets, and this in whatever part of the world they are, is to this day very constantly done

by them; their ſcriptures for ſome conſiderable time till Ezra, were very near loſt, but he revived, and ſettled the Canon of them, and from him they had them, and they have been tranſmitted from father to ſon, with infinite care and exactneſs ever ſince; nay, in common the care of them have been ſuch, as to make it morally impoſſible that ever they ſhould have been corrupted; in whatever parts of the world theſe people are they have them, and the very ſame too every where, which is a great proof that they never were corrupted. We have ours from what is falſely called the Septuagint, but true yet, no doubt, nevertheleſs, and that they are, they have this very ſtrong proof, that not only that they were approved of by our Saviour, which is the greateſt of all proofs; but alſo beſides, that they are, without any material difference, exactly the very ſame with what the Jews every where have, and this ſtrongly proves them both to be true.

As for the New Teſtament, for that being the writings of the inſpired Apoſtles, we have this proof, that they have without any conſiderable contradiction or oppoſition, in all ages been acknowledged for the genuine and true writings of thoſe men whoſe names they bear, and that by even enemies as well

as

as friends; nay, in all the controverſies concerning the Chriſtian religion, which in the infancy of Chriſtianity were very frequent, the arguments on both ſides were taken from theſe writings, which undeniably proves that the adverſe ſide admitted them to be true; if beſides this, the writings in themſelves, both as to matter and manner are impartially conſidered, it cannot, I am ſure be denied, but that they have the utmoſt marks of truth in them; as to the manner of their being written, it is in a plain unaffected ſtile, with great ſimplicity, and without any manner of art whatſoever; and as to the matter contained in them, it is all every way worthy of God himſelf to be author of, for it is all of the higheſt conſequence to all mankind that poſſibly can be, it in every thing acquaints us with the mind and will of God, and the way and means conſequently how we may in the life to come obtain everlaſting happineſs and avoid everlaſting miſery. I ſhall not upon this ſubject enlarge farther, it being beſide my purpoſe to ſay ſo much, I hope what is ſaid will ſatisfy all reaſonable men; as for all thoſe that are ſatisfied, that thoſe ſcriptures which we have, both Old and New Teſtament, that God is indeed the author of them; it cannot ſure be doubted, but that they will value them as an ineſtimable treaſure, and ſuffer even

death, as multitudes of people for the ſake of them have done, rather than part with them; that they will reverence them, will always think of them, will love them, will frequently read them, and that with all poſſible intention and application of mind, that they will, as God himſelf, in the eleventh chapter of Deuteronomy, commands we ſhould, lay them up in their hearts and in their ſouls, will bind them for a ſign upon their hand, that they may be as frontlets between their eyes, and teach them their children, ſpeaking of them when they are ſitting in their houſes, when they are walking by the way, when they are lying down, and when they are riſing up, and even write them upon the door poſts of their houſes, and upon their gates. All this ſurely, and much more, theſe ſacred, theſe venerable, theſe ſo highly concerning writings, as they are to us all, are truly worthy of; and he that does all this, will ſurely find ineſtimable benefit by it, for he will improve himſelf in underſtanding, knowledge, and piety, more than in all the books of the whole world beſides will or can do; they will, as the Apoſtle St Paul ſays, make him wiſe to ſalvation.

To theſe moſt ſacred writings I appeal, whether the doctrine contained in theſe papers

papers is true or not; as for my own part, if I knew or did believe that there was a word in them contrary to them, I myself would be the first that should commit them to the flames; but, on the other hand, if what is here said is no ways contrary but agreeable to these holy Oracles, what then, then error, surely in the very fundamental part of all religion both natural and revealed is among us held, our prayers are directed to a wrong object, and the One only and true God is in a high degree dishonoured, wronged, and injured; all this I say, supposing I am not mistaken, is the consequence; if upon examination I shall be found in an error, in God's name let all things stand as they are, for my hearty desire, no matter for this work, is, that religion in this my native country, especially may be held in the utmost purity that possibly can be: I would indeed be glad for the sake of the honour of God, it should be so held all the world over, but farther than this, my own native country, I have nothing to say. I shall only add, that if what is here in these papers said is true, it is of such a nature as to be redressed, will admit of no delay; if it was possible to be done even to day, it ought not to be deferred till to morrow, for shall we, after conviction,

continue

continue a ſingle day, if it could be avoided, to pray to a wrong object, God forbid.

I WITH all humility ſubmit this whole work to the ſerious conſideration of all truly wiſe, learned and good men, hoping, that if it is worthy of it, that it may meet with a favourable reception, and a ſuitable encouragement; if it is erroneous, I am willing it ſhould with infamy be condemned.

I CONCLUDE with prayer to Almighty God, That God in his great goodneſs and mercy would open all our eyes that we may ſee, and all our hearts that we may rightly and truly underſtand, perceive and know thee the One only and true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent. Amen.

A LETTER

A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR, &c.

A

LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR, &c.

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR's Friend Out of the COUNTRY.

SIR,

I Herewith return you the papers which you was so kind to lend me for my perusal; but though I have read them very carefully over, I cannot yet directly give you my determinate opinion of them; you know my principles have always been in favour of the Trinity; but some things nevertheless in your discourse stick hard upon me, so hard that if you are not mistaken in, I shall my self very much suspect the truth of my former principles; in order to be farther satisfied concerning this doctrine in general, which I

greatly desire to be, as being of the utmost consequence in religion, I will, the next time I come to town call upon you, and discourse the matter with you more particularly, and at large. In the interim I am, with all due respects,

SIR,

Yours, &c.

A CON-

A

CONFERENCE

Held betwixt the

AUTHOR and his FRIEND,

Concerning the ſubject matter of the preceding diſcourſe.

Friend. I FIND by the diſcourſe which you lent me for my peruſal, that you are no friend to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Author. INDEED I am not; neither can I ſee how any truly wiſe and good

man can be, it being in the highest degree contrary both to scripture and reason.

Friend. If you can certainly prove that it is plainly contrary to either of these, I shall soon be convinced it is contrary to both; for as they both came from God, they surely cannot be contrary one to the other: but pray, how do you prove this; and take care what you say, for you know the contrary to what you say is generally held.

Author. I know it, and therefore I shall, consistent yet with truth, use the utmost caution. As to its being contrary to reason, nothing surely can be more certain, for every one that holds this doctrine, in so doing, does necessarily hold that there are three Supreme and Independent Beings; and that, I am sure, is not only contrary to reason, but even to the very light of nature; but this yet notwithstanding, whether he will in words own it or not, he does, I affirm, most certainly do; for in so many words, he plainly says, that the Father is God Supreme, that the Son is God Supreme, and that the Holy Ghost is God Supreme; if this is not holding three Supreme Gods, surely no words can make it so; to palliate this, it is, I know, said, that these, though owned to be three, are yet really but one Being only. This, though so directly

directly contrary to ſenſe and reaſon, is all the anſwer that is made for their acknowledging three Supreme Gods, and we muſt take their words for it too, for reaſons why it is ſo, they give none, nor do not pretend to do it; but if mankind muſt be thus dealt with, they may as well ſay thirty are but one as well as three, and that too if they ſaid ſo, I affirm, is as poſſible as the other, I appeal to your own reaſon, whether this is poſſible to be.

Friend. As you appeal to me, I muſt confeſs I cannot ſay it is; but it is ſaid that the ſcripture ſays ſo, and if it does, I hope then you will believe it, though you do not comprehend it.

Author. YES ſurely, if the ſcripture plainly and clearly ſays ſo, I will, in ſpight of all oppoſition, believe it; for I am ſure what God ſays is infallibly true; but where, let me aſk, does the ſcripture ſay any thing ſo unreaſonable as this.

Friend. DOES not our Saviour himſelf in the tenth chapter of St John's goſpel ſay, "That I and my Father are one;" and again in the fifth chapter of the firſt epiſtle of St John, is it not expreſsly ſaid, "That "there are three that bear record in heaven, "*viz.* the Father, the Word, and the Ho-"ly Ghoſt: and theſe three are one."

Author.

Author. I WONDER, after reading my discourse, that you should produce these texts to prove this by, you know I have there fully answered both of them, the first especially, so distinctly and clearly as that I do not see that any thing can, even by the greatest caviller, be said in opposition to it; and the other, I have given three reasons to shew that it is a spurious interpolated text, and many more reasons I know may be, and really are, by others given to prove the same thing; but I was the less careful to insist long upon this text, because I am almost confident that it is by the truly learned and wise of all sides given up; a gentleman some years since wrote a whole book to prove this text spurious, and I never to this very day heard that it was ever by any one answered. Have you any more texts to prove this doctrine by.

Friend. I PROFESS I do not know of any one more.

Author. NOR I, I solemnly declare, and if there are no more, what, I pray, can be said in favour of such a principle as this; the principle is, That one is three, and three one; and both reason and scripture you see are directly against it, and yet, which is very wonderful, it is generally held as a principle even in the Christian, *i. e.* in the truest, the holiest, and the most reasonable

reasonable religion that is, or ever was in the world, and this among Protestants too.

Friend. I MUST say it seems very strange and unaccountable, but there is a text, and it is by you in your discourse expounded, which in plain words says, That the Son is equal to his Father; the words are, "Who, *viz.* the Son, being in the form "of God, thought it not robbery to be equal "with God," this text no less person than Bishop Pearson, in his exposition of the second article of the Creed, lays very great stress upon; nay, and to me seems from it fully and clearly to gain his point.

Author. BISHOP Pearson was most certainly a very great and learned man; and his exposition of these words, considered in themselves only, is very just; but if he had taken in the whole passage to this purpose, as I have done, I am confident, that he could not have interpreted the words as he has done; whether my interpretation, which takes the whole sense in, is just or not, I willingly submit to all wise and good men.

Friend. YOU are, and that, I think, justly offended at this doctrine; because you say, it necessarily introduces a plurality of Gods; but do not you do the same thing yourself? You say indeed, that there is only one God Supreme; but then you also

say,

ſay, that the Son in way of generation is God too.

Author. I SAY ſo, becauſe God himſelf has ordained it ſo; and if he has, who dares ſay to the contrary; as he has a Son, I have ſhewn, that even in reaſon he cannot, though not Supreme, yet be otherwiſe than God; and revelation, I have proved, concurs in the ſame thing.

Friend. THE reaſon you give why the Son cannot be God Supreme, is, becauſe he is not ſelf-exiſtent, *&c.*

Author. YES, that is the reaſon; and I here again affirm, that ſelf-exiſtence is eſſentially neceſſary to the Supreme Divinity; and that it is what properly denominates God himſelf to be Supreme; and farther, that this perfection is not even by God himſelf communicable: nay, and farther than all this, I affirm, that it is not in the power of God, by any manner of ways whatſoever, to produce his equal.

Friend. YOU ſay the Son is God, but not Supreme.

Author. YES, by generation, I tell you again, he is God; and even in reaſon, he cannot be conceived to be otherwiſe, becauſe he was begotten of God. Beſides, by my expoſition of the firſt verſe of St John's Goſpel, I have, I think, unanſwerably

ſwerably proved, that he is in that ſenſe God, and no otherwiſe.

Friend. YOU ſay that he is not equal to his Father.

Author. NO; for how can he poſſibly by any one be thought ſo, ſince it is by all acknowledged, that he neither had even his very Being from himſelf, nor ſo much as any one thing elſe that ever he was poſſeſſed of; but all, on the contrary, entirely from God his Father.

Friend. BUT is there not ſuch a union between God the Father and him, as to make him the ſame Perſon with his Father.

Author. WHAT you aſk now, pardon me, in telling you ſo, is unintelligible, and even downright nonſenſe; and contrary beſides, both to reaſon and ſcripture.

Friend. IF the Son is not God Supreme, nor equal to his Father, nor ſo united to him, as to be individually the very ſame Perſon; ſurely the holding him to be ſo muſt be a dangerous and fatal error.

Author. YES, dangerous and fatal to be ſure, in the higheſt degree it is; for it is no leſs than robbing God of the honour due only to him, and giving it to another where it is not due; it is againſt the very light of nature; and contrary to the very

 firſt

first principles of all religion, natural and revealed.

Friend. I WONDER, since this doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the scripture, how it came to be so generally received.

Author. AND so do I prodigiously wonder at it; for since it is certain it is not found in the scriptures; it surely must necessarily follow, that it is no other than a human doctrine; and that, to say no worse of it, a grossly unreasonable one too.

Friend. BUT it is said, the doctrine of the Trinity is a great mystery, and above human comprehension.

Author. As it is taught by men, *viz.* by Fathers and Schoolmen, it is so puzzled, perplexed, darkned, and confounded, that it is indeed a great mystery; but take it from the scripture, from whence only it ought to be taken, and it is no mystery at all; for there every where the Supremacy of God the Father is very plainly asserted; and that being allowed, the whole doctrine of the Trinity falls to the ground.

Friend. YOU say that prayer ought not to be made to the Son.

Author. YES, I do say so, and I here again affirm, what in the discourse is proved, is true.

Friend.

Friend. DOES not St Stephen in these words, saying, "Lord Jesus receive my "spirit," pray to him.

Author. WHAT is that to the purpose; you do not surely think, such a transient expression as this sufficient to warrant, much less to establish, prayer in general to be made to him; St Stephen was then dying for him, and at the same time saw him standing at the right Hand of God, and in such a circumstance as this, it was natural for him to speak thus to him; but this in general can be no warrant for us, who are not in the like circumstance as he was, in common to pray unto him; besides, if you look into the text itself, you will see reason to think, that these words of his to the Son are really not a prayer to him; for the text expressly says, that, calling upon God, he said these words to the Son; the calling upon God was, no doubt, praying to him; but pronouncing the words, *viz.* Lord Jesus receive my spirit, was, it is expressly said, no more than saying of them to him. I have dwelt too long upon such an objection as this; let any one shew me in the whole Bible an express precept for praying to the Son, and I will give up the cause; if this cannot be done, I know not what excuse can be made for a fault of so high a nature as this, *viz.* praying to the Son, is;

for it is ſtriking at the very foundation, and overthrowing the firſt principles in all religion, natural and revealed; it is giving that honour, which is only due to God, to another, and even at once deſtroying and confounding all manner of religion; for that religion, that directs us to a wrong object to addreſs ourſelves to, is ſuperſtition only; if not much worſe, and no religion at all.

Friend. YOU ſeem upon this ſubject to be very warm.

Author. WARM, it is a ſin in ſuch a caſe as this to be cold.

Friend. I MUST confeſs, the very vitals of all religion is in this matter concerned: Biſhop Pearſon, in his expoſition of the ſecond Article of the Creed, reſolves our obligation of paying divine worſhip to the Son, from two texts of Scripture, one in theſe words is taken out of the fifth chapter of St John's Goſpel, *viz.* "That all men "ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour "the Father;" the other is taken out of the fifth chapter of the Revelations.

Author. THE firſt of theſe texts I have myſelf, in my diſcourſe, expounded; and, I think, unanſwerably proved, that it cannot be taken in the ſenſe that this very learned Biſhop does; whether my expoſition is right or not, is very cheerfully ſubmitted

mitted to the reader. I have, because very much is laid upon it, been pretty large and particular in my exposition of it; but I might and also really have given the full and true sense of the text too; as I shall now do, do it in a much shorter compass; the Bishop recites a part of the text only, but the whole verse is thus; "That all "men should honour the Son, even as they "honour the Father. He that honoureth "not the Son, honoureth not the Father "which hath sent him:" the case of an Ambassador from a sovereign Prince, if we may compare small things with great, is, I think, exactly parallel to the sense of these words: An Ambassador being by his Prince sent to another Prince, every one knows that the same honour whilst he is in that employment is due to him as would be given even to his Master himself; and any dishonour being done to him would, no doubt, be interpreted as done to his Master that sent him; though this cannot be denyed, yet after all, no one surely will say, notwithstanding an equal honour is paid to the Ambassador, as to the Master, that yet the Ambassador is as great as his Master. This case, I say, is exactly parallel to these words in the text: The Son is an Ambassador sent into the world by God, and, as such, all men should honour him, even as the Father;

"he

" he that honoureth not the Son, honour-
" eth not the Father which hath ſent him;"
they ſhould, I ſay, as an Ambaſſador honour him even as the Father; for Ambaſſadors even among ourſelves, are, as I have ſhewn always wherever they are ſent, honoured, though otherwiſe, very far from being equal to their Maſters, yet even as their Maſters, and he therefore that any ways diſhonoureth an Ambaſſador diſhonoureth his Maſter that ſent him; the very ſame it is with relation to the great Ambaſſador in the text; he muſt by all men be honoured, even as the Father which hath ſent him; but this yet does not prove him, any more than a common Ambaſſador is equal to his Maſter, to be equal to him that ſent him; but as he is ſent, the very contrary; neither can this honour, that is to be paid to our Ambaſſador, to be ſure, extend farther than he himſelf preſcribes: prayer in particular to be made to him, it is certain, he no where requires from us; to offer it up therefore to him, is ſo far from being a duty, that it is ſurely no leſs than a great and grievous ſin againſt God his Father, to whom only it is due; this I take to be the true, natural, and genuine ſenſe of the words; and I cannot think that any other ſenſe can be put upon them, without being greatly forced, ſtrained, and unnatural,

tural; the ſenſe contended for, I am ſure, is in the higheſt degree ſo; and, becauſe it is ſo, it is certain, the cauſe that is ſupported by it is very weak and defenceleſs; and yet, as ſtrained a ſenſe as this is, which is lamentable to conſider; almoſt the whole of that religious worſhip which is paid to the Son is built upon it, upon this, and the other text which you named out of Biſhop Pearſon, it is altogether built; and becauſe it is, I ſhall conſider that too; this text is taken out of the fifth chapter of the Revelations; the words are thus, "I heard "a voice,— ſays the Apoſtle, ſaying, that— "every creature which is in heaven, and "on the earth, and under the earth, and "ſuch as are in the Sea, and all that are "in them; — ſaying with a loud voice,— "bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and "power be unto him that ſitteth on the "throne, and unto the Lamb for ever "and ever;" in theſe words, it is moſt certain, the ſame bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, which is given to God the Father, which ſitteth upon the throne, is given alſo unto the Lamb; but ſurely yet, with very great deference; for read the verſe before the text, and you will ſee that all this is not ſaid for the inherent worth that is in the Lamb, as it is in him that ſitteth on the throne; but, becauſe he

was

was slain, therefore he was worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing; and all this is by the Father conferred upon him too; for, it is expresly said, he received by the will of God what was rendered to him; in the verse after the text, it is said, that to all this the four beasts said Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped; worshipped who? not surely the Lamb, no, but the Father that liveth for ever and ever. Let any honest and judicious person consider all this, and he will, I am confident, see much stronger proof directly against what it is brought for, than for it.

Friend. I HAVE attended to all you have said upon these two texts of scripture with a great deal of pleasure; for really I think you have given a fair, candid, and just interpretation of them both; and yet if you have, all that is on the other side built upon them, must necessarily and unavoidably fall to the ground. I have no farther questions to put to you concerning the Son; but as to the Holy Ghost I am something surprized at what in your discourse you say of him; for you say, nay, and I think you have fairly proved it too, that he is no where in the scripture so much as stiled God; and if he is no where there so

stiled,

ſtiled, to be ſure, God, much leſs Supreme God he cannot be.

Author. THAT he is not in the ſcripture any where ſtiled God, is very certain; but, to be plain with you, I do not in thoſe ſacred writings ſee ſo much as any colour for his being ſo termed, no inferences, no deductions, no acts by him done, whereby any man can reaſonably be induced to conceive ſo of him.

Friend. IF this is true, the Lord have mercy upon us, for ſurely we are in a wrong way indeed, we are worſhipping I know not what, and even making Gods of our own inventions.

Author. IT is pity ſo excellent, ſo incomparable a religion, as the Chriſtian, in itſelf, is, ſhould not be held in its full purity.

Friend. YOU are of opinion, I ſee, that the Holy Ghoſt did not proceed from the Father and the Son, but from the Father only.

Author. YES I am ſo, and my reaſons given for it are, I think ſufficient to ſatisfy any one elſe that is not prepoſſeſſed or prejudiced.

Friend. I CANNOT ſay but that this diſcourſe that I have had with you upon this ſubject has given me a great deal of ſatisfaction; whether it will ſatisfy others

or not I cannot ſay; but, conſidering what prejudices the generality of people are governed by, it is very probable it will not.

Author. OLD principles, eſpecially in religion, though almoſt ever ſo erroneous, are very hard to be overcome; ſome will not ſee, and many others are not capable to diſtinguiſh truth from error; and ſuch as theſe, of all religions all the world over, commonly take up, without examination, their religion, upon truſt; but others ſtill there are capable to diſtinguiſh truth from error; and theſe, eſpecially if they have religion at their hearts, will, at leaſt, conſider and examine what is here offered; and more than this I do not deſire from any man; for it is poſſible, after all, that I may be miſtaken; and if I am, God forbid that any man ſhould by me be led into error; or that I myſelf either, if in error, ſhould continue in it; no, my ſoul is at ſtake, and that I am ſure is of infinitely more conſequence to me than the whole world.

Friend. YOU ſay it is poſſible in the principles you have here laid down, that you may be miſtaken; I thought you had gone upon a certainty.

Author. ALL men you know are ſubject to error, and no man whatſoever infallible; therefore it is that I ſaid this; but I do not, notwithſtanding, by any means think

ſo;

ſo; for, on the contrary, I am in my mind, as firmly aſſured that I am not, as if I could, for the truth of all I have ſaid, produce even Mathematical demonſtration: the ſubſtance of all that we have been diſcourſing of, is no more than this, that God the Father has no equal; and that he is above all infinitely Supreme; and, if I am miſtaken in this, ſo then alſo is nature, reaſon, and revelation, for they all with one voice loudly proclaim the very ſame thing; this everlaſting truth.

Friend. IF people would lay by prejudice, I think, your diſcourſe might have ſome good effect.

Author. THE miſchief is, people commonly look into one ſide of the queſtion only; if they would be perſuaded to look indifferently into both ſides of the queſtion, as they ought to do; and as, if they were wiſe and true to themſelves, they would do; there would be ſome hopes of bringing people over from error to truth; but this muſt not be expected, though the cauſe that is here eſpouſed is the cauſe of even God himſelf.

FINIS.